

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
SY-05 MCT-02 SNM-05 DEAE-00 HA-05 /086 W
-----015229 081454Z /47

P 081405Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9959

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, CO
SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY: GOC PROMULGATES TOUGH NEW
SECURITY STATUTE

1. ON SEPTEMBER 6, GOC PROMULGATED NEW SECURITY STATUTE, SETTING FORTH VARIOUS MEASURES TO DEAL WITH COMMON CRIME AND TERRORISM. IN RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCASTS LATER IN THE DAY, MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT ZEA HERNANDEZ AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE CAMACHO LEYVA EXPLAINED THAT STATUTE HAD BEEN DRAWN UP BECAUSE GAPS IN EXISTING LEGISLATION AND INCREASNG FREQUENCY OF SUCH CRIMES AS KIDNAPPING, DRUG TRAFFICKING, EXTORTION AND TERRORISM NECESSITATED SUCH ACTION. ZEA ALSO EMPHASIZED GOC'S DEDICATION TO PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DECLARED THAT STATUTE WOULD NOT IMPAIR RIGHTS OR SOCIAL GUARANTEES ENJOYED BY COLOMBIAN PEOPLE.

2. AMONG SPECIFIC MEASURES PROVIDED FOR BY GOC ARE INCREASED PENALTIES FOR THOSE FOUND GUILTY OF KIDNAPPING, PARTICIPATING IN ARMED REBELLIONS, TERRORIST ACTIVITIES, EXTORTION, AND ILLEGAL POSSESSION, MANUFACTURE, TRANSPORT OR SUPPLY OF ARMS. IN CASE OF KIDNAPPING, THE PENALTY FIXED BY THE STATUTE IS 10-20 YEARS IN PRISON, 20-30 WHEN THE VICTIM DIES. TERRORIST ACTIVITIES INVOLVING THE USE OF EXPLOSIVES WILL BE

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PUNISHED BY 2-6 YEARS OF PRISON AND BY 20-24 IF SUCH ACTIVITIES RESUL IN ANYONE'S DEATH. IN ADDITION, THE STATUTE PROVIDES FOR CONTROLS OVER THE PUBLICATION BY RADIO OR TELEVISION STATIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS, DECLARATIONS, OR COMMENTARIES RELATIVE TO PUBLIC ORDER QUESTIONS.

3. COMMENT: THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT MOST COLOMBIANS SUPPORT

STRONG ACTION BY THE GOC AGAINST THOSE ENGAGED IN CRIMINAL AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. PUBLIC CONCERN HAS RECENTLY BEEN FUELED BY A REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE OUTGOING HEAD OF DAS (ADMINISTRATIVE SECURITY DEPARTMENT) LEON LINARES TO FORMER PRESIDENT LOPEZ, IN WHICH LEON CITES FIGURES OF 324 KID-NAPPINGS AND PAYMENTS OF U.S. \$158 MILLION IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS. THERE IS SOME SKEPTICISM, HOWEVER, AS TO WHETHER THE MEASURES ENVISAGED BY THE NEW STATUTE WILL DO THE JOB. ASECIO

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SECURITY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BOGOTA08536
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780366-0723
Format: TEL
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780985/aaaacsdr.tel
Line Count: 71
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 37807053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1494994
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTERNAL SECURITY: GOC PROMULGATES TOUGH NEW SECURITY STATUTE
TAGS: PINS, CO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/37807053-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014